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## Contributors and Correspondents

[For the Presbyterian.]

### THREE OLD SCOTCH WORTHIES.

BY REV. J. A. R. DICKSON, TORONTO.

#### II.—DAVID DICKSON.

David Dickson was born in the City of Glasgow, about the year 1688; the exact date cannot be ascertained. His father's name was John Dickson, a devout man and a wealthy merchant. Like Samuel, he was given in answer to prayer, and like him too, devoted from his birth to the service of God. The pure atmosphere of Christian piety that obtained in his father's house is strikingly shown by his act. He was sent early to school and made some progress there. But ere long he was taken from school and sent to sea, in the capacity of a supercargo, his parents meanwhile having forgotten their vow, being now determined to train him up to merchandise. Like Jonah, his ship was overtaken by storms, and suffered loss, and he himself laid low by severe sickness, which together were the means of recalling the vow made by his parents, and also of its solemn renewal.

Upon this happy turn of events he was sent to the University of Glasgow, where under the excellent system introduced by Andrew Melville, he made such satisfactory advances in solid learning, that at the end of six years he was found so well qualified for the duties of instructor, that he was appointed Professor of Philosophy in his own College.

In this position he remained eight years, when he was called to the charge of the Parish of Irvine. This was in 1618, when he had reached the mature age of thirty-five. But he had not been over six months at his work in Irvine before the prelate party demanded his submission to their authority. The high-handed and overbearing nature of Archbishop Spotswood need not be recounted here; suffice it to say that Dickson having thoroughly mastered the question at issue, declined the authority of the Court of High Commission, and was thereupon deprived of his ministry at Irvine, and ordained by ecclesiastical decree to enter Turf in the north within twenty days. On his return to Irvine he preached earnestly and faithfully till the twenty days were expired, and thereafter as long as he could at the residence of the Earl of Eglinton, until he was ordered to his place of banishment. At Turf he still continued preaching. His friends after much entreaty secured his recall in 1622. Then began his great work. Before his banishment he was popular as a preacher, great crowds attending his services, but now with the Confessor's crown upon his head he became famous. Multitudes came from all quarters to hear him; from the adjacent parishes, from remote districts in Scotland, and also from England. Many families even settled in Irvine that they might enjoy the benefits of his ministry. His separation from his charge had shown him the importance of improving every opportunity to preach the word; therefore in addition to the regular Sabbath services he began a week day service on the Mondays, which were the market days there, so timing the service that it was gone through with before the market commenced. This service was blessed of God to the conversion of many souls. It originated the great Stewarton Revival, which lasted from 1825 to 1830, and wrought great spiritual and moral good to the whole of Scotland. As a preacher Dickson was a great spiritual anatomist; dealing skillfully with dead hearts and half-awakened consciences, solving difficulties and applying Christ's Divine fullness to the emptiness of men. He was the "well-favoured proper old man," that shewed the English merchant all his heart. When Stirling, one of his students, was about entering on his ministerial work he summed up his advice to him in these words: "Oh, study God well, and your own heart." His discourses that have come down to us, especially his "THERAPEUTICA SACRA, showing briefly the method of healing the conscience concerning regeneration," shew how intimately acquainted he was with the human heart. Like Rutherford, his sermons are full of Christ, Christ meeting the spiritual and moral wants of men. He liked to deal largely with the Scriptures. He was wont to say "God's hairs should get a good bland (slice) of his own bread," and confirming his precept by his practice, he generally took three or four verses and expounded them. A selection is better than any description.—"Christ is well qualified for his employment; there is nothing requisite for his work but he has it; in his person, offices, endowments, he is fully furnished with every thing, that he may be a meet mediator. He is the Son of God and Son of man, and so a fit man, being sibil (kin) both to God and us. If we be blind, he is a prophet to instruct and teach, and reveal God's will to us; and if we have enemies, he is a king to control them, and rule over all our enemies with a rod of iron; if we be cursed and filthy, he is a priest to bless us. And for His endowments, he has gotten the Spirit without measure that out of his fullness we may all receive grace for grace; he has wisdom, strength, and ability to do all our work. So then we may lippen (trust) our soul upon Him, and we may be sure nothing committed to Him shall fall through His fingers; no burden how heavy soever laid on him shall fall because of the weight of it; nothing shall be forgot for want of memory. Albeit there were never so many floating on the water ready to perish He can help all; for He has large arms to spread over them all at once, so as no other man can

do, He can help and hoist up all their heads at once above the water. Then, let us sit down under his shadow, and if we want light and comfort, come and get all supplied in Him, for He is fully qualified in all."

Again, "Do look to Christ, in whom all the promises are yea and amen. Take Christ in thy arms, and getting Him thou gettest all the promises of life, salvation, and glorification; and if thou forget the words of a promise that fits thy estate, cast thy eyes upon Christ; then dost thou fall upon the whole bundle of promises, and out of them missing the particular promise, thou cannot miss Him." Again, "Behold, your king comes, meek and lowly, riding on an ass's colt." Albeit He was a great king, yet oftentimes we went on foot; and when He rode it was on a laigh (low) beast, that any might have stood beside Him and rounded their petitions in His ear as He rode." "Let a man be what he may for the time bygone and present, yet if you fly to Jesus, seeking to be purged, come to Jesus, and be ranked the morn at the table, with the vessels of honour." From these extracts it will be seen how clearly and closely and comfortably he preached. He could not miss the mark. He aimed to save his hearers in all he said. His faithful sermons remind us again and again of the ring of Latimer's. Of the THERAPEUTICA SACRA no idea could be given in an extract. It was the work of his old age, written by him when he was seventy-two. It gathers therefore the experiences of Irvine Enquiry Meetings and transmits them as a precious possession to posterity. It is as solid and Scriptural a piece of theology of its kind as we know. It is to every theological student and Christian minister of inestimable value. It cannot be studied too deeply; and the study of it will save from much misdirection of souls, such as we fear obtains to-day.

His great success in Irvine made him to be much sought after. On one occasion, in his absence from the Assembly, and therefore without his knowledge or consent, at the time, he was appointed to preach before the General Assembly in Edinburgh. Before this he had refused repeatedly to preach in Edinburgh, but now out of regard for his brethren he consented. The day arrived, the Church was packed, the preacher well prepared, but on announcing his text the whole subject went from him and he stood dumb. At length he spoke thus "I see God will not suffer any mean clay instrument put in his room—he will not give his glory to another—there is too much looking to man, and too little to God." After a few more broken sentences he prayed and dismissed the Assembly. This was to many an impressive sermon, indeed, to see one so gifted stricken dumb on a grand occasion. He was a tower of strength to the Church in the trying times of 1638, in aiding to keep it under King Jesus only. In 1642 he was chosen to fill the Theological Chair of the University of Glasgow; which he did for nine years. One of the most pleasing thoughts we have of this time is, that it was while here, while strolling out over the height above the Cathedral with a student named Durham, much beloved by him, not only for his ability and parts, but for his spiritual mindedness, that they digested that important tract which was afterwards dictated to a clerical friend, entitled "The Sum of Saving Knowledge." A tract which often serves as a textbook for Presbyterian youth in Scotland. And what can be better? In 1650 he was chosen to the same chair in Edinburgh University as he held in Glasgow. Sir Hugh Campbell of Cessnock, gave this account of the different grades of Dickson's pulpit eloquence: "The professor of Divinity at Edinburgh is a truly great man; the professor of Divinity at Glasgow was a still greater man; but the minister of Irvine was the greatest man of all." When he was asked what made this difference in his preaching he replied that he wanted his books—these anxious souls that had been wont to wait upon his ministry. These always are a minister's best books,—books inspiring to the noblest effort, and suggestive of the most important thoughts. In 1681 the act of Supremacy was passed and Dickson was thereupon deprived of his chair in the University. In seven months after he was attacked by his last illness. Livingstone called upon him at this time and asked him what he thought of the present state of affairs; he said that he was sure that Jesus Christ would not tolerate the indignities inflicted upon his work and people, and "as for myself," he added, "I have taken all my good deeds, and all my bad deeds, and have cast them together in a heap before the Lord; and have fled from both to Jesus Christ, and in Him I have sweet peace." Having called his family together he addressed himself to each, and pronounced the apostolic benediction, and went home full of labours.—"He being dead yet speaketh."

Two gentlemen were discussing the divinity of Christ, when one of them affirmed that, if it were so, it should have more explicitly stated in the Bible. The other said, "How would you express it to make it indubitable?" He replied, "I would say that Jesus Christ is the true God." The other answered, "You are happy in the choice of your words, and they are the very words of inspiration. St. John, speaking of Christ, says, 'This is the true God and eternal life.'"

PROFESSOR CHILDERS died July 25th. He was the author of a Pali dictionary, a work of great eminence. It is impossible, says a competent judge, to realize how great the loss has been to science. To an unusually powerful memory, and penetrating intellect, he united an indomitable energy, and a single-headed devotedness to truth, and an unusual earnestness in the cause of research. He has done much to bring English scholars acquainted with the religious literature of Buddhism.

[For the Presbyterian.]

## THE MINUTES OF ASSEMBLY.

The Acts and Proceedings of the Second General Assembly of our Church make a volume of very considerable size. It would be idle to dilate on the importance of the items which have swelled out this year's book to the size to which it has grown. It seems to be as much larger than the similar volumes sent forth by the several churches in preceding years, as the Church it represents is larger than any of those that the several books represent. As we contemplate the volume somewhat fondly, we may think of the value and authority it will have for the ecclesiastical historian of the 20th and 21st century. As he compiles his picture of the past, he will turn to this as an authority of the first value. He will have no hesitation in accepting facts and figures, found in the volume as he turns it up in a College Library. In view of such an use to be made of it, as well as to use now as a book of reference, what a pity so many dates, names, and facts are so inaccurate and misleading. The Recording Clerk of Assembly, Professor Mackerras, is not at fault. Few officers equal him for efficiency and accuracy. The fault lies with Clerks of Presbyteries, and Conveners of Committees. Your correspondent contributes his mite to the ungracious task of pointing out some of the blemishes that occur. Others, in other parts of the Church may attend to their share.

And first let me pay my respects to the Convener of the Committee on statistics. Some, not at all, of what is now to be referred to, were pointed out to him at the time the sheets were circulated among the members of the Assembly in Toronto. What was then done in the best spirit possible, appears to have been love's labour lost. Your correspondent is very well aware, that in the first instance the errors are partly owing to the negligence of those who furnished the returns, and partly perhaps to the Convener's want of familiarity with names of places in the Eastern Provinces. There is no excuse for the latter however, as there are members of the Committee from the east. All however, is not owing to the cases mentioned.

In one section of the Report, the Convener says he got no returns from three Presbyteries, one of these being Pitou. Somewhat farther down we are informed that all the congregations of Pitou Presbytery report more or less fully. How are these two statements to be reconciled? We have a theory for it, but it is not our business to explain where there is a living authority to refer to. When was Wm. B. Clark, pastor of St. Andrew's Church, Quebec? He is bracketed with Dr. John Cook, as being a retired minister of that congregation. We in the east were under the impression that Mr. Clark was formerly pastor of Chalmers' Church, of which Mr. Wright is the present pastor, but if a western authority says we were mistaken, we of course will yield the point.

In some instances there is a strange lack of uniformity between what is found in the statistical statement, and what is found in the financial one. There is an example of what we mean in the returns of the Presbytery of St. John. Mr. Jack's charge has got two congregational numbers, 4 and 5, while Mr. Gray's has got none at all; it appears as if an appendage to Mr. Johnson's. In the financial statement all is represented correctly. The financial statement has the advantage in point of accuracy in the particulars. What is Springfield financially, and in a similar manner River Charles becomes River Charlo. Springfield and Charles are places unknown in the New Brunswick ecclesiastical world.

Was there not some confusion of thought in the minds of those who filled up the schedules, as to the exact meaning of the expression Regular Charge? An authoritative definition is needed. Who will give it? The Presbytery of St. John seems to be wonderfully prolific in regular charges, no less than sixty-nine of them are reported in that one Presbytery. One aged father just retired, had nine of them in charge. It was no wonder he broke down under the burden. Another, by no means young, still struggles under the weight of eight of these regular charges. The brethren in the west appear to be much more sparing of themselves. No doubt they are wiser in their generation.

But where has table C gone to? On page 160 of appendix is table B, on next page is table D, but C is gone. There is room enough for it on page 151; there it appears it was intended it should be. I find it in the copy of the Statistical Report which I got when in Toronto, but it is not in the Acts and Proceedings. Let a Toronto detective be put on the track of the absconder, and that without delay.

[Our correspondents' last complaint is certainly groundless. Table C will be found in its proper place, on page 117 of the appendix. Had the table in question been placed on page 151, it would be under Financial instead of Statistical, as it should be.—Ed. B.A.P.]

A PIOUS cottager, residing in the midst of a lone and dreary heath, was asked by a visitor: "Are you not sometimes afraid in your lonely situation, especially in the winter?" He replied, "O, no; for faith shuts the door at night, and mercy opens it in the morning."

## Irish vs. Scottish Loyalty.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Sir,—In last week's issue of your paper a letter appears dated Edinburgh, 10th Aug., in one paragraph of which the writer says: "The City, indeed, all Scotland is agog over the Queen's visit. I have admired nothing so much in this country as the quiet unwavering yet undemonstrative loyalty of the whole people. It contrasts so favourably with Ireland (the italics are mine). Her Majesty seems to feel so secure and so much at home anywhere in Scotland." Now, sir, I have no objection to the writer of above holding up Scotland's loyalty to the gaze of an admiring public so far as I am aware. No one questions that; but I do object to him doing so at Ireland's expense. It is a well known fact (and the writer in question should have made himself better acquainted with how matters stand before making such an assertion), that the North of Ireland especially is loyal to the core. No doubt there are a few discontented individuals in the South (and where are these not to be found) who are making a great fuss in favour of Home Rule, etc., but I ask it is fair, is it honest to brand the whole people as disloyal (for it amounts to this), because there are a few amongst them who never succeed in anything but disputing between themselves. I venture the assertion that were Her Majesty to make a tour of Ireland from Cork to Londonderry, she would meet with such a loyal reception that even Scotland's "unwavering," "undemonstrative" loyalty would pall before it.—Yours etc.,

Toronto, 19th Sept. 1876. T. A. L.

## Presbytery of Lindsay.

A regular meeting of the Presbytery of Lindsay was held at Cannington on the 20th Aug. The following was a part of the business transacted: Rev. A. Currie, M.A., who officiated as Moderator for the past year, retired from the chair after a neat and appropriate address. The thanks of the court were cordially tendered him for the services he rendered so efficiently during his moderatorship. Rev. E. Cockburn, of Uxbridge, was appointed moderator for the ensuing year. Rev. Messrs. R. H. Warden and W. Lochard, being present, were invited to sit as corresponding members. An extract minute of the records of the General Assembly was read intimating that the recommendation to transfer the congregation of Fenelon Falls and Somerville, and that of Haliburton to the Presbytery of Lindsay shall lie on the table of the General Assembly till its next meeting. There was read a memorial from St. Andrew's congregation, Bolsover, asking to be placed on the list of supplemented congregations in the Presbytery. Mr. Moir and Mr. McFayden were heard in support of the memorial. A deputation consisting of Rev. Messrs. McKay and Murray was appointed to visit the Bolsover congregation to ascertain what is the maximum amount that can be raised by them towards sustaining Gospel ordinances. It was further resolved to apply to the Assembly's Home Mission Committee for a supplement of \$100 for the ensuing year in favor of Bolsover congregation. Upon motion of Rev. J. Campbell, seconded by Rev. J. McNabb, an examining committee was appointed to consist of the following:—Examiner in Hebrew, Rev. J. L. Murray; Greek, Rev. E. Cockburn; Theology, Rev. J. McNabb; Church Government, Rev. J. T. Paul; Church History, Rev. J. Campbell; Personal Religion, Rev. A. Currie. Mr. Murray was appointed to assign Mr. H. McPhayden subjects for trial discourses with a view to license. Mr. David Forrest applied through Rev. E. Cockburn to be received as a student in Knox College. It was agreed to appoint a committee consisting of Rev. Messrs. Cockburn and McLennan to examine Mr. Forrest in regard to personal piety and literary attainments, and should the examination prove satisfactory, to certify him in the name of the Presbytery to the College Board. The court next took up the consideration of the mission stations within its bounds. It was agreed that each minister of the Presbytery should give one Sabbath's supply gratuitously to the mission field during the fall and winter. Upon motion made by Mr. McNabb, seconded by Mr. McClung, it was resolved to instruct the Presbytery's representative to the Assembly's Home Mission Committee to ask a supplement of \$200 for Kirkfield and Victoriaville; \$200 for N. Mara and Carden, and \$100 for Bolsover; also for Cobocok, Head Lake, and Digby mission station, \$8 for every Sabbath supplied in Sunderland and Vroomantou. The next regular meeting was appointed to be held at Cannington, on the last Tuesday of Nov., at 11 a.m.—J. L. MURRAY, Pres. Clerk.

## Presbytery of Guelph.

The Presbytery of Guelph held their usual bi-monthly meeting on Tuesday, 10th ult., in Chalmers' Church, the Rev. Mr. Smellie, of Fergus, Moderator. After reading and sustaining the minutes of last meeting, commissions were produced from several Kirk Sessions in favor of Elders to represent them in Presbytery and Synod, and the names of the parties were added to the roll. The following minute was adopted regarding the late Mr. Lutz, of Galt, who was at the last meeting of the Presbytery, but whose death had occurred in the interval: "The Presbytery of Guelph would humbly acknowledge the hand of God in the removal of Morris O. Lutz, Esquire, who was, at the time of his death, a member of this Court, as Representative Elder of the Kirk Session of Union Church, Galt. They would put upon record the deep and sincere esteem in which they held him, and their sense of the value of his counsel both in meetings of Presbytery and of the committees on which he was

appointed to act, and in which he always displayed his interest by the regularity of his attendance, and the expression of his opinion on the matters that came up for consideration. The Presbytery would express their sympathy with the widow and children whom their late brother has left behind him. May they be enabled to trust Him who has said, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.' And may all the members of the Court be properly impressed by the lesson which God in His Providence is teaching, and have their lives kept and their lamps burning, and be prepared for the coming of the Lord." The clerk was instructed to send a copy of this minute to the widow. It was agreed that the next Presbyterian Sabbath School Conference be held in Knox Church, Guelph, and a committee, consisting of the ministers of the town and the representative elders from each of their Sessions, was appointed to prepare a programme and report at next meeting; Dr. Hoop, Convener. Mr. Torrance tendered his resignation of the Moderatorship of the Kirk Session of Eden Mills congregation, and the same was accepted, when, on motion, Mr. McPherson was appointed in his room. A carefully prepared report was presented from the German Mission Committee Fund, containing a large amount of valuable information, and recommending, among other things, that the erection of a new church be not proceeded with at Preston, as originally contemplated, but that the German Methodist Church be purchased, as it would be available at a cost much less than that for which a new one could be built. The Presbytery agreed to this, and authorized negotiations to be opened for the purchase of the same. The clerk submitted a detailed statement of the amounts to be paid by each congregation, as its proportion of the claims of the Home Mission arrears, the expenses of the General Assembly, the German Mission in the bounds, and the Synod Fund, when it was agreed that the statement be received, and that circulars be issued addressed to the treasurer of each congregation, setting forth the sums for which it was liable. Mr. Torrance, Convener, presented the report of the Committee on the Superintendence of Students laboring or residing in the bounds—and the same was received and its recommendations adopted. The committee was re-appointed, with the addition of Mr. John Davidson. Mr. Bentley reported that he had organized a congregation at Preston, consisting of twelve members and twenty-six adherents. His conduct was approved, and the roll was handed in to the Presbytery. The committee appointed at last meeting to visit Winterbourne, Conestogo, Elmira, and Hawksville, submitted an elaborate and interesting report stating, among other things, the striking work of grace going on in some of these places, recommending that Elmira and Hawksville be joined, with the view of constituting one pastoral charge, and that, in accordance with the desire expressed by the people themselves, a station be not opened at Conestogo. The committee, to whom it was referred at last meeting to consider the best way of carrying on the mission work of the Presbytery, gave in their report, when it was decided, after careful deliberation, that further consideration of the same be postponed till next meeting. Dr. Caven, principal of Knox College, Toronto, being present by invitation of the Presbytery, addressed the court on the state of the funds of the different colleges connected with the church, especially that of Knox College; after which a long and interesting consideration of the subject was held, closing with the adoption of the following resolution:—Proposed by Mr. Wardrop, seconded by Mr. Bentley, "That the Presbytery express its satisfaction with the visit of Principal Caven, its deep interest in the lucid statement that he has made in regard to the position and needs of the colleges, and its determination, in dependence on Divine aid, to maintain in full efficiency these institutions as essential to the welfare and extension of our church, and already so largely owned and blessed of the Lord for these ends. Furthermore, that it be an instruction to the committee appointed to consider what method or methods can be adopted to induce all congregations in the Presbytery to contribute to the schemes of the church in some measure in proportion to their circumstances, to give special attention to the state of contributions in our Presbytery to the College Fund, and to report to the next ordinary meetings, whereupon the Presbytery shall enter into a full conference on the subject. Reports of mission labours in the bounds were read from Messrs. Ross and Eastman. A petition was read from Moorefield, praying the Presbytery for reasons assigned, to apply to the Home Mission Committee for a grant of \$150 towards payment of salary of Mr. Anderson, under whose pastoral charge it had been placed. After full consideration of the circumstances it was resolved that the application craved for be made by the clerk on the petitioners furnishing the information necessary to be laid before the committee. The supply of mission stations and vacancies were left with the clerk. Next ordinary meeting was appointed to be held in Chalmers' Church, Guelph, on the second Tuesday of November, at ten o'clock a.m.

A HINDOO and a New Zealander met upon the deck of a missionary ship. They had been converted from their heathenism, but they could not speak to each other. They pointed to their Bibles, shook hands, and smiled in each other's faces. At last a happy thought occurred to the Hindoo. He exclaimed: "Hallelujah!" The New Zealander in delight cried out: "Amen!" In these two words not found in their own tongues, they were able to express their thoughts.